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Action

Professional Services Committee of the Whole

Career Technical Education

Executive Summary: The present requirements and standards for Designated Subjects Vocational Education Credentials have not been revised for over ten years. In that time vocational programs have diminished, mostly due to the focus on academic achievement and lack of vocational resources. Lately, there has been a resurgence of interest and need to revitalize vocational education in California. This agenda action item requests that Commissioners direct staff to begin to review and update, if necessary, credential requirements and program standards for Designated Subjects Vocational Education Credentials.

Recommended Action: That the Commission accept the staff recommendation to begin a process of reviewing, and if necessary revising, the credential requirements for Designated Subject Vocational Education credentials.

Presenter: Helen Hawley, Consultant, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates.

November-December 2006

Career Technical Education

Introduction

The Governor has demonstrated support for career and technical education. On November 1, 2006, during a meeting of vocational education experts at the Jack L. Schuetz Career Center in Bakersfield, Governor Schwarzenegger called attention to the need for alternatives to college preparation in California secondary education. The Schuetz Career Center is an alternative facility for preparing special needs students with vocational training and workplace readiness skills. However, these are not the only students who may not choose to attend college after high school. Many students' interests focus more on application of skills and knowledge than on academic learning. All students deserve strong academic programs in high school. Those who choose to pursue their interests and develop their knowledge and skills in the workplace instead of in college studies should be able to obtain an introduction and orientation to the workplace in high school as part of their course work.

It is important that all secondary school students have access to alternatives to college preparation that are relevant and productive. To be able to provide such alternatives, schools need to be able to offer programs and hire qualified teachers from the occupational fields most in demand today. Because those fields have shifted in demand over the last ten years, it is important for teaching credentials and preparation programs to be updated to reflect the needs of today's workplace, including both college preparation and career and technical preparation. Highly qualified teachers of career and technical education should be prepared to guide students in practical applications of their academic knowledge in addition to teaching specific job skills. This suggests high quality vocational education teacher preparation that reflects the current education research and the present demands of the workplace.

Background

The Designated Subjects Credentials and Program Standards were last revised in 1993. These credentials include vocational education, adult education, special subjects, and supervision and coordination credentials. Title 5 Regulations were subsequently revised to reflect the revised standards. A new expanded finite and specific list of subjects was added (Coded Correspondence 95-9508). In 2000 the Commission authorized an amendment to Title 5 Section 8004 and added Section 8005 which authorized teachers with single subject credentials in agriculture, business, health, home economics, and industrial and technology education to teach vocational classes in and related to these subject matter areas without any additional authorization.

The Commission authorized a task force in 2001 to research the relevancy and appropriateness of the Designated Subjects Vocational Education Credential requirements through statewide surveys of teachers and administrators. The task force conducted a study of vocational teaching credentials over a period of six months and prepared a set of recommendations for changes to the credentials. Commission administration decided not to pursue changes at that time and no Commission action was taken.

Discussion

Presently, Designated Subjects Vocational Education Teaching Credentials authorize the holder to teach the “designated” vocational subjects named on the credential in grades 12 and below, and in classes organized primarily for adults, in technical, trade or vocational courses which are part of a program of technical, trade or vocational education. The subjects authorized by these credentials are based on five years experience in that occupation, such as computer programming, rather than on an academic program of study. In addition the credentials require completion of an approved two-level professional preparation program. The first level meets the requirements for a preliminary credential. The second level completes the preparation for the professional clear credential.

Lately, there has been significant interest at both the national and state levels in career and technical education. The August 2006 reauthorization of the Perkins Act expands and extends federal resources for career and technical education (HR 366, the “Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act). This will provide schools with the resources to revitalize their career and technical education programs. California SB 1292 (Chapter 752, Statutes of 2006) authorized the inclusion of designated subjects teachers in staff development for teaching English language learners, which will insure that career and technical teachers are prepared to teach bilingual students.

A number of other factors are important to consider about these teaching credentials:

- The authorized subjects list for vocational education credentials has grown to over 175 but does not include current technology job skills.
- The occupational sectors were redefined by the US Department of Education and the US Department of Labor in the 1990’s to reflect the changes in the nation’s workforce.
- The US Department of Education renamed vocational education “Career and Technical Education” in the 1990’s and the California Department of Education made that change in the last few years.
- In May 2005, the California State Board of Education adopted the first academic content standards for Career and Technical Education for California.

These and other significant recent changes suggest that it may be appropriate at this time for the Commission to direct staff to review the requirements for the credentials and explore modifications to program standards for preparation for vocational education teachers. There may be other important considerations for improving vocational teacher preparation in California that could be informed by current research on career and technical education and expert advice. Review activities could include staff research, stakeholder meetings, field surveys, and an advisory panel.

Staff Recommendation

That the Commission direct staff to develop a plan for reviewing Designated Subjects Vocational Education Credentials and program standards and consider possible modifications to the requirements.